

T. B. WINDROSS

**ISLE DE LA DEMOISELLE
AND
OTHER POEMS**

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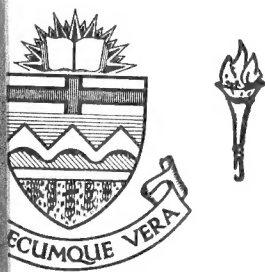
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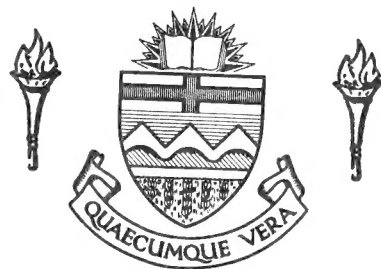
THE BOOK

THE POEMS in this book cover a wide range of subjects — history, nature, legend and religion. Much of their inspiration has come out of the author's personal experience, and the book, *Isle de la Demoiselle*, is offered to its readers with the hope that it will please and entertain them.

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ISLE DE LA DEMOISELLE
AND
OTHER POEMS

By T. B. WINDROSS

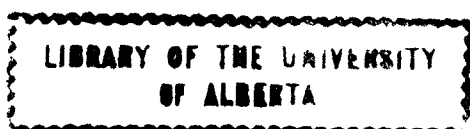
T. B. Windross



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To My Wife
For love and loyalty
over many years



INTRODUCTION

OURS MIGHT well be called a "prosaic" age. It thinks and acts like prose: in commonplace, unimaginative, utilitarian terms. Words are like tools: to be used in the earning of a living, and to carry on the daily round of duty and pleasure.

Thomas B. Windross, in refreshing contrast, is a poet. He thinks in unusual, creative and reflective terms. He uses words like an instrument of music: to pour forth the song of man's tragedies and simple joys; to pluck the strings of man's secret hopes and unspoken prayers.

In this little book, we escape for a time from the prose of life and enter the shrine of the poet. Here he plays for us on his lyre, now the "still, sad music of humanity", now the stirring hymns of man's faith. But at the end, we know that while the shrine was indeed an escape from prose, it was not a flight from life, for the songs have sprung from the heart of one who has known and seen and felt life in many moods. In these pages he has shared these experiences with us, and we are grateful.

It is my privilege to be the author's friend, and to have read these poems on their way to the press. I am sure that all who read them will feel that in some strange way, they are the poet's friend also.

(Rev.) CLIFFORD A. S. ELLIOTT, S.T.M., Ph.D.

*Robertson United Church,
Edmonton, Alberta.*

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE POEMS



Conversation Piece . . .

Mrs. V. S. Kaufman, who recently published an illustrated account of historic Alberta Churches, has been complimented in receiving a copy of *Canadiana* of 1959, published by the National Library. Included are references to her book under religious subjects and under the section on fine arts.

Mrs. Kaufman's signature, Caroline Reesor Kaufman, is well known on her many paintings. Her book, *Historic Churches of Alberta and the Canadian North West*, is a venture in writing as well as drawing.

* * *
At the age of 86, T. B. Wind-

ross has published a book of poems.

Mr. Windross has many friends in Edmonton. They may be surprised that he is 86, but are not surprised that he has published *Ile de la Demoiselle and Other Poems*. He says that he has been writing verse since he was 15.

The poems relate legend and history, with melody and gusto. The book divides to "Moods and Tenses" and includes a notebook of thought and observation, retold in rhyme.

He now has quite a tower of years from which to survey the past. What he obviously likes to pick out for his tales is romance and adventure, as seen by one in the middle of the march.

Edmonton Journal Apr 15 - 1960

ISLE DE LA DEMOISELLE

The legend of the beautiful niece of Jean Francois La Roque, Sieur de Roberval, first viceroy of Canada, who is said to have been marooned by her uncle on a small island in the Straits of Belle Isle, at the most northerly tip of Newfoundland, is one of the many legends in Canadian history. Marguerite Roberval's sad story was first told by the ancient cosmographer, Andre Thevet, and later copied by the 16th Century writer Haklyut. The legend is one of the most beautiful ever told.

There is an isle on a northern coast,
Where Atlantic waters meet the Strait,
Where many a storm-lashed ship was lost
And luckless seamen met their fate;
The French adventurers knew it well
As les Isle de la Demoiselle.

Its wooded hills and sun-washed vales
Are over-blown with sweet wild rose,
There, sheltered from the colder gales,
The pitcher plant in marshes grows;
In wintertime its land-locked bays
Lie frigidly thru' snow-blown days.

The ancient pilots shunned its shore,
'Twas haunted home of demon hordes!
Wind-born voices in their topmasts bore
The curses of its evil lords;
The sylvan beauty of that lonely isle
Was garden fair for Satan's guile.

'Twas on a bright mid-summer day,
A stately galleon lowered her sail,
And anchored in that haunted bay,
So runs the legend's ancient tale,
Her tapering topmasts swept the sky,
High as the seagulls soar and cry.

The French king's viceroy in the west
Was captain in his monarch's name,
And planned to plant on every crest
The glorious, lillied oriflamme;
With tyrant's power, but little skill,
He strove, his cup of woe to fill.

He brought his niece to share his toil,
O cruel guardian of her tender years,
Dragged her from her native soil,
To blight her hopes with salty tears;
And now, to gratify his stubborn pride,
Maroon her by this foreign tide.

Her eyes were blue as the violet,
Her cupid lips like the ruby rose,
Her hair was a gleaming coronet
For a soul that no evil knows;
Her voice was as sweet as a temple bell
When holy priests their matins tell.

Marguerite had pledged her simple troth
Where youth had cast its golden spell,
And roused her uncle's furious wrath,
Because in love, she loved too well;
And so, her Dearest Love, O sad alarm,
Was doomed to hang at a ship's yardarm.

With scornful mein the viceroy stood
Beside the taffrail on his deck,
And planned in evil, vengeful mood,
To bring her dream of love to wreck;
The sailors plied a stalwart oar,
To land her on that fateful shore.

No wimpering cries for mercy came
From lips that spoke her true desire,
No cringing penitence to shame
Her purest passion's sacred fire,
She loved, and faithful to her vow,
She bore her cruel sentence now.

In desperate rage, her lover cried
Against the viceroy's evil scheme,
And, struggling to the galleon's side,
Plunged boldly in the chilly stream,
And when he to the surface broke,
Swam shoreward with an eager stroke.

The viceroy cursed and swore an oath
To leave them on that desert isle;
He ruthlessly condemned them both
To living death and dread exile.
With anchor in and sails unfurled,
He left them to their ghoulish world.

The evening shadows draped the sea,
And woodland odours filled the land,
And through that night of tragedy,
The lovers rested on the strand;
But when the morning light had come,
They sought a shelter for a home.

In love they saw no stain of guilt
To soil their strangely fateful life,
And when their fragile house was built,
She was to him divinely wife;
And thus their exiled days were sped,
In time that's stolen from the dead.

Each tiresome day and troubled night,
They watched the grey and empty sea,
In hope of rescue from their plight,
And surcease from their captivity.
The slothful months wore sadly on,
Till faith seemed vain, hope nigh gone.

When winter locked the bay in ice,
And stilled the music of the streams,
An angel spoke, with infant voice,
To cheer the dullness of their dreams.
And Marguerite held her little child,
And worshiped when it faintly smiled.

But fate held still another blow
To crush their dream of happiness,
Too soon the exiles were to know
The pain of sorrow's wilderness;
The infant's gentle spirit fled,
And left their tattered courage dead.

And then, the infant's ailing sire
Was taken from his cherished wife,
When fiercely burned the fevered fire
That was the toll of toil and strife;
She laid him by his baby son,
And lived in bitter grief alone.

Her days were haunted by the thought
Of happy things that might have been,
Her solitary nights were fraught
With ghostly fear of things unseen;
But rescue came one welcome day,
To end her suffering and dismay.

A sail! a sail, in the nor'west breeze,
Was trimmed to pass the haunted isle,
The sailors saw, near the breaking seas,
A sight they took for demon's guile;
A frantic maid in her dire despair,
Was praying to them for rescue there.

And, so the legend's story goes,
Marguerite dwelled in Picardy,
Where pearly, scented hawthorn grows,
Close by the silver channel sea,
To dream her dream and say a prayer,
For the island love she buried there.

POSTSCRIPT

In death the viceroy paid his debt,
For he who laughs must also weep,
And he who sows must not forget,
The harvest comes when he must reap.

SISYPHUS

In Greek legend, a king of Corinth who was an able ruler, but noted for his rapacity and deceit, was for his many iniquities, and because he betrayed the secrets of the gods, condemned after death perpetually to push up a hill an immense stone, which as soon as it neared the top always rolled down to the bottom.

An ancient legend tells the tragic rede
Of a king, who from his regal throne,
For vile deceitfulness and wicked deed,
Was to the nether darkness thrown,
By edict of the gods to toil alone.

The secrets of the gods he had betrayed,
With revelry, rapacity and lust;
He spurned the laws the gods had made,
And by his sin betrayed their trust;
Vengeance of the heavens was just.

Hurled from its parent mountain rock
To the pit's dark, hollow-sounding womb,
A mighty stone, by earthquake shock,
Lay ready for the royal sinner's doom:
And for his endless labor in the tomb.

From deepest bottom of the gloomy well,
In bitter payment of his foul offence,
That granite rock, from where it fell,
Must he by mainforce lift it thence,
Obedient to his pagan providence.

But, lo, when he had reached the crest,
By utmost effort of his anguished soul,
And paused to give his limbs a rest,
Back to the the deep the stone would roll,
Beyond the weary king's control.

Thus Sisyphus, in everlasting grief,
Perpetually doomed to toil in vain,
And never from his labor find relief,
Must strive to lift the rock again,
Tho' lifting gave him greater pain.

The vault was cold above his head,
Where yawned the horrid, dark abyss,
And all his cherished hope was dead,
That he could gain eternal bliss;
His gods were adamant in this.

The pagan deities were unimpressed,
By mercy's tender, pitying plea,
They steeled an angry, vengeful breast,
To curse the king eternally,
Nor from his suffering set him free.

Thus, he who sells his soul to crime,
Nor counts the cost of evil ways,
Will miss the fragrance of the thyme,
The sunlit glories of the days
To gain the wage that evil pays.

And he who tries to free his soul
By weary labor of his own device,
Will find the bitter toil and toll
Is futile in his fight with vice
There is no victory in the grave.

GHOSTS ON CARIBOO TRAIL

The ghosts of the eighteen sixties
Haunt the hills of the Cariboo Trail,
Where the men of the roarin' sixties
Went in quest of their Holy Grail—
The rich gold that they came to seek,
In the gravel bed of Lightning Creek.

They walk the silent, dog-leg streets
Of tumbledown, desolate Barkerville,
Trailing their filthy winding sheets
On the lurid pathway of avarice still;
Seeking the hope that once they sold
For lewdness, lust and tainted gold.

Inside the deserted, old Nicol Hotel,
They crowd around the tottering bar,
In the gathering dust, the musty smell,
As the wind blows the broken door ajar,
Athirst for the bawdy joke and rum,
That once was the price of Kingdom Come.

There sounds a dismal dirge of fate,
From St. Saviour's empty belfry tower,
And creaks the wooden, graveyard gate,
Harmonious with the midnight hour,
As to their tomb, beneath the mould,
The ghosts return without the gold.

PRAIRIE SCHOONER TRAILS

Far to the west, in the sunset glow,
Stretch the prairie schooner trails,
Crossing the land of the buffalo,
Where the slinking coyote wails.

Over the pathless, desolate plain,
Through the purple, starlit night,
Over the roadway of never again
To the dreamer's home of delight.

Out to the west, the far, far west,
The covered wagon trails led,
Marking the wanderer's tireless quest
For the land where heroes are bred.

Out in the west grass has grown
On the paths the oxen travelled;
And never before has mankind known
The magic time has unravelled.

Far to the west, in the sunrise glow,
Go the forged-steel shining bands,
And mighty cities now rise and grow
In the far-flung western lands.

SHIPWRECK ON THE FUNKS

Coast folk tell their salty yarns,
Of wild and troubled seas,
Of harbor dues and ribald crews,
And wicked barratries;
And fishermen who troll the bays
In sunshine and in rain,
Recall the days of sailing ways,
And wish them back again.

Some there are who glibly boast
Of a bold piratic deed,
Of a woeful ghost on an iron coast,
Where angry storm winds breed;
But one has told a stirring tale
Of shipwreck on the Funk,
Of grinding ice and avarice,
When the Sally Ann was sunk.

Those were the days of lusty men,
Of lusty, well-built ships,
Of smuggled rum and Kingdom Come
When the last sheet anchor slips;
When Eli Snow, in sin like Cain's,
From the bottom of the bay,
Said sealing gains, for all its pains,
Was stingy, skimpy pay.

He daily schemed to find a plan
To multiply his hoard,
And to fully man the Sally Ann,
With crew and stores aboard;
He built a lonely winter hut,
With stove and sleeping bunks,
To wait for snow and drifting floe,
With seals, on the barren Funks.

The nor'west tempest swept the main
With bitter freezing breath,
Slob ice churned, hard frost burned,
And threatened crewel death.
The Sally Ann's big cable strained
And broke in the angry swell,
She failed to ride the wintry tide,
In the lightning's awful knell.

Her crew had landed on the isle
Of spray-washed flinty stone,
But the winter tilt they had built,
By the gale into bits was blown;
And soon the waves rose mountains high,
And the hurricane grew worse,
And fiercely Eli cursed the sky,
With a bitter, sinful curse.

Night was black as a bad wolf's throat,
With the raging of the seas,
The seamen clung, like victims flung
To the storm fiend's deviltries;
And one by one they fell away,
And one by one went down,
In the freezing spray 'twas hard to pray,
And a man could only drown.

Ten were swept by the boiling surf
To a dark and watery tomb,
But one alone was ever known
To escape that night of doom—
To live to tell of the stormy hell,
And the frightful loss and grief,
Of wind and ice and of avarice,
On the sea bird's barren reef.

THE NAHANNI VALLEY

Far north, beyond the settled region of the Northwest, lies a country, where legend hints at untapped deposits of virgin gold, and lush semi-tropical valleys dark with mystery; it is named the Headless Valley, where prospectors looking for its wealth perish and are later found as decapitated bodies.

Far north, among the twisted hills,
The South Nahanni River spills
Its torrent down Virginia Falls,
And hollow, voiceless echo calls
To wastes of weirdest mystery.

There wells of heated water boil
Beneath the lush, encumbered soil,
And legends of its tainted gold,
Tales of death and crime unfold,
In Headless Valley history.

The Indians shun its bitter lands,
Where evil's done by hidden hands,
And wicked demon spirits brew
The murder schemes of Manitou,
In nameless, secret deviltry.

Fourteen mortal men have died,
In bloody, lonely death beside
The tortured valley's fatal stream,
As if in bad, infernal dream,
To face a stark eternity.

If devil, ghost, or robber band,
Guards that fearsome shadow land,
Miners there for lust of gold,
Have never yet returned and told
The tale of its barbarity.

TRINITY BAY DISASTER

History in Newfoundland has always been recorded in tragedies, shipwrecks, sealing disasters, great fires in St. John's, storms and famines. On February 28, 1892, the Trinity Bay sealing disaster swept scores of men to their death.

The dawn came up in fiery glory,
A blood red path across the sea,
Fearful omen of the tragic story
Of the Bay of Trinity.

The morning sky was cloudless,
Tho' 'twas strangely, coldly blue,
And the warm spells in the winter,
Bred the angry storms men knew.

The off-shore fishermen were idle,
Save for hunting caribou,
Slob ice blocked the coastline,
And the sealing herds were few.

'Twas but two months past Christmas
When they heard the drift ice grind,
And the barking of the harpies
Sounding lively down the wind.

Men from Trinity and Trouty,
From Salmon Cove to Random Sound,
Gathered in their little dories
Where the sealing herd was found.

Men and boys from every village,
Joined the slaughter on the floe,
Clubbed and stacked the seal pelts
On the frigid Arctic snow.

Overhead the sky had clouded,
And the wind had veered to west,
The drift ice heaved and shuddered
On the sea's uneasy breast.

The hunt went on 'till mid-day,
When grey mist threatened snow,
And the hunters, tired and hungry,
Saw 'twas getting time to go.

Anxious rowers manned the dories,
Pulled for home with might and main,
Many in the slob ice perished,
E're they gained their home again.

Men adrift upon the ice pans,
Raced to reach the distant shore,
But the howling of the tempest
Thundered "Never, never more."

Men from every sheltered harbour
'Round that deep and fatal bay,
Faced the bitter blast with courage,
Met their death without dismay.

Far along the shore the dwellers,
Saw the flickering fires aglow,
Telling how their harassed brothers
Fought the tempest on the floe.

The dawn came up in sombre shadow,
Fog, like shrouds upon the sea,
Church bells tolled a mournful message,
'Round the Bay of Trinity.

ALBERTA

Land where the prairies meet the foothills,
 'Neath sun-washed skies,
And toil with honor for her sons fulfills
 Wider destinies;
Where the setting sun bright limns the west,
And, rising, wakes the cowboy from his rest.

Land where Indian hunters rode the plains
 And made their kill,
Where the painted warriors' bloodguilt stains
 The valleys still.
Land of the trader, trapper, miner, freed
From the lust of blood, the guilt of greed.

Land where plunging torrents surge below
 Snow-capped peaks,
Fed by the glaciers' grinding ice and snow,
 To boiling creeks;
Where fruitful rivers wend their stately way
Through many a warm, refulgent summer day.

Land of the prairie crocus, wild pink rose,
 The wooded screes
Where the brown-eyed, yellow sunflower grows
 Beside the trees;
Freedom's land, God's land, richly blessed,
Its peaceful homes by stalwart sons possessed.

Land whose heroes sprang, new armed, to fight
 The envenomed foe,
And conquering bore their brave laurels bright,
 Her peace to know;
Land where the homeless find a home, a friend,
And courage crowns the humble laborer's end.
Freedom's land, God's good land, forever more.

BATTLE OF SIGNAL HILL

In 1762, in the month of May,
When ice was melting in the bay,
St. John's and all its people lay
Under the Frenchman's rule.

D'Haussonville and his infantry,
Were boastful of their gallantry,
In martial pride and pleasantry,
Like giddy boys at school.

When thunder of the cannon's roar,
Off the Narrows' guarded shore,
Echoed through the hills and o'er
Quidi Vidi's salty pool.

Amherst with seven hundred men,
Was ready in the little glen,
To storm up Signal Hill, and then
Destroy the foreign fool.

With courage keen, spirits high,
His soldiers let the bullets fly,
And swore to conquer or to die,
And keep their valour cool.

They put the Frenchmen on the run,
Captured the fort and every gun,
And set their standard in the sun
Of freedom's favored rule.

Seven hundred men against the foe,
Seven hundred heroes there to show,
And let the timid Frenchmen know
The glory of true liberty.

No longer does the foreign yoke
Oppress the humble fisher folk;
The thunders of Britannia spoke
To make Newfoundland free.

MUTINY ON H.M.S. LATONA

The influence of the French revolution was affecting dissident elements everywhere; the taint had spread to the British navy and a mutiny broke out on some of the warships anchored at the Nore in 1797. Insurgent agents carried the disaffection to the Atlantic fleet, based at Halifax, N.S., and St. John's Newfoundland, where an outbreak on board H.M.S. Latona was quickly quelled by the courage of Sir William Waldegrave, the last of the naval governors in the island.

'Twas the year 1797, of national shame,
The French king's jewelled sceptre fell
From tyrant hands, and all men turned
To welcome liberty in freedom's name,
Tho' freedom's robes ran red from Hell
When the fires of revolt had burned.

St. John's citizens were all aghast
With rumours of a bloody fight
Aboard "Latona", King's trim ship o'war;
The flag that floated from her mast,
Proud ensign of Britannia's might,
Hung limply in the breeze off shore.

The harbour lights were burning low,
And, in the merchants' shuttered shops,
Candles sputtered in the fitful draught;
The sky held signals of a bitter blow,
And tavern idlers drank sour slops,
And told their yarns of fore an' aft.

Seeds of French insurgency had spread
An evil plague of crime and guilt,
From warships anchored at the Nore
To those in port near Cuckshold Head;
Decks where only loyal blood was spilt
Saw treason stalk enarmed for war.

The sullen seamen claimed the right
To choose their captain for the ship,
And, armed with hatchet, handspike, knife,
Like pirate crew, provoked a fight,
Not reckoning that the admiral's whip
Could blister when revolt was rife.

With fearless step and bitter scorn,
Sir William trod the quarterdeck,
And lashed those rebels with his tongue,
'Til hope was dead before 'twas born:
"We'll blast ye're ship into a wreck,"
He said, "and drown ye're rebel song."

Old Waldegrave told the guns ashore
To sink the ship with red-hot shot,
And burn the scurvy crew to Hell;
The rebel braves their cockades tore,
Forsook the plans of sansculotte,
And lived their future sons to tell,
That he who serves, serves freedom well.

HANGING OF MICHEL GAILLON

The first man to be hanged in Canada was Michel Gaillon, a member of Sieur de Roberval's company of adventurers who was condemned to death for petty theft, by the French viceroy in the winter of 1543.

Black winter locked the wilderness
In frigid ice and deepening snow,
And o'er Cap Rouge the frost smoke
Swept in gusts, foretelling woe;
Pale horror held the fortress gate,
And death stood sentinel to fate.

The Frenchmen's venture in the wild
Provoked its ancient, untamed rage,
And nature's might, unreconciled,
Did elemental warfare wage;
The viceroy's proud incompetence
Was fatal to the fort's defence.

The mantling forest held them fast,
In sickness, famine, fear and pain;
Still floated from the barrack mast
The ancient flag of French domain;
The pagan Indians pitying stood,
To see the waste of toil and blood.

Close by the wall a gibbet loomed,
A gaunt and ghostly clanking form,
And from it swayed, by tyrant doomed,
A frightful thing against the storm,
A tortured, stark, corrupting corse,
Fouled by sin, its shame and curse.

First fruit of the cruel gallows tree
To stain the sweet Canadian air,
Dread victim of the law's decree
To pay its toll in black despair,
To satisfy a tyrant's mad despite,
And curse him through eternal night.

Black winter locked the wilderness
In frigid ice and deepening snow,
And 'round that frame of dark distress,
The wind's weird song was sad and low:
'Of all man's crimes against his kind,
This was the vilest,' sang the wind.

MOODS AND TENSES



FRECKLE FACE

Freckled face and auburn hair,
Eyes of blue with mischief there;
Ragged shirt and tattered jeans,
Body full of jumping beans.

Curious glance for every sight,
Hates to go to bed at night;
Loves his Mummy and his chum,
Spends his "revenue" on gum.

Scans the funnies every day,
Slow to put his things away;
Wants to stay away from school,
Says it "ain't the golden rule."

Always blessed with appetite,
Thinks he's clean, seldom quite;
Sometimes good, sometimes bad,
Always he's your little lad.

Happy, restless coming man,
Daddy's best, most loyal fan;
Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Lay Thy blessing on the child.

I MADE A GARDEN

I made a lovely garden near my door,
Where flowers had never bloomed before,
And spread the lawn of emerald green,
Where only tangled wilderness had been.
Through every restful summer night,
I breathed its sweetness with delight,
And, from the fragrant, fruitful soil,
Found purer pleasers through my toil.

ALL HALLOWS E'VE

All Hallows E've, elfish midnight of the year,
When spooks and goblins roam abroad,
And beldames' broomstick horses ride the air,
Like moonbeam shadows on a lonely road.

When shrouded ghosts in unghostly flight,
Pass down the street on mischief bent,
And youthful voices fill the joyous night,
With cries of apples and of merriment.

When Betsy Jane or Sally Ann, in ancient gown,
And Charlie Chaplin with sooted face,
Demand their tribute, and the bashful clown
Gives weird performances with grace.

All Hallows E've, youth's evening of delight,
When fairies dance to tinkling tunes,
And Laughter rules the realms of fright,
With brighter brilliance than the moon's.

AUTUMN LEAVES

The autumn leaves of faded bloom,
Of ochre, green and burning red,
Like antique carpet from the loom
Of some old weaver, now long dead,
Lie scattered o'er the hillside road
That skirts the naked, empty screes,
Where summer's latest goldenrod
Nods gently in the cooler breeze.

They twist and twirl and hurry 'round,
When the gusty west winds blow,
And rustle with a silken sound
Where the bramble bushes grow;
They gather in the forest trail
To whisper in their leafy breath,
That dying does not mean to fail,
And ripeness isn't final death.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

March 17

March, month of the warrior god,
Whose banners, steeped in blood,
Cast lurid clouds on every road
That led to peace or brotherhood;
Month of the Vernal Equinox, the Ides
Of dread tragedy, when ill betides.

Immemorial month when Ireland pays
Honor to St. Patrick's ministry,
And Erin's sons in Erin's praise,
Wear shamrock in their heraldry;
When wit and song defy the gloom
Above the place of Patrick's tomb.

The heathen god of war defied
St. Patrick's Christian rectitude,
But green the grass where saintly died
The monk who earned beatitude—
The saint who made the shamrock be
The emblem of the Trinity.

SONG OF THE EBB TIDE

The evening sun sinks in the west,
And twilight shadows drape the sea,
The circling seagulls seek their nest
And leave the night to solitude and me.

The murmurings of the ebbing tide
That laps the kelp-clad, yellow shore,
Are rhythmic with the waves that ride
The shallows on the ocean's floor.

Tides will ebb and tides will flow
And leave their flotsam on the sand,
No matter how the storm winds blow
And lash their fury on the land.

And every lunar swelling of the deep
That lifts the stranded craft again,
Is sad with echoing gales that sweep
The dim-lit caverns of the main.

Where ancient ships in tempests lost,
Lie rotting in their watery doom,
And opaque shadows, like their ghost,
Haunt the silence of their tomb.

O'er wind swept cape and angry shoal,
From ocean's waste of tossing wave,
The loud anthems of the tempest roll,
Majestic requiem to the perished brave.

And through the ruck of tattered mists
That veil the purple shadowed night,
The hope for calmer seas persists,
And paints with gold the dawning light.

ALCOLDAMA

Dark shadowed land, where horror reigns,
Malevolent, in black Cimmerian gloom,
Cursed field of blood, whose vile stains
Encrimsoned the scenery of doom;
Where treason, murder, greed and hate
Befouled the traitor's bitter fate.

O borderland of hopelessness and Hell,
Sad, tortured vale of dark remorse,
What measure of revenge can truly tell
The weight and burden of thy curse?
What power on land, or sea, or air,
Can plumb the depth of thy despair.

And yet, from that All-Hallowed Cross,
A voice in pitying tones replies,
For all who sin and suffer loss,
The Son of Man, Man's Saviour dies;
Perchance its pleading is for even you:
'Forgive, they know not what they do.'

TEARS

Who of all the sad sons of men
First felt the sting of salty tears?
Who first knew grief, and then
Bedewed her eyes to drown her fears?
Was it, with tragic tearful eyes,
Eve, who wept for loss of Paradise?

Who first, with heavy, broken heart,
Stood by the cold and hollow grave,
And tried to ease the bitter smart
Of tears, her ancient pride to save?
Was it Old Mother Eve, again,
Who wept for exiled, rebel Cain?

Who first knew the healing balm
Of mother's love and mother's tears,
To cleanse his contrite heart and calm
The anguish of repentant years?
Who first merged his tears with hers
When he had harvested his tares.

Who first felt the knife-like sting
Of love despised, or virtue slain?
Of courage crushed and perishing
In scalding tears that burn and stain,
When hope lies broken in the dust
For lack of faith and simple trust?

Who first of all shed human tears?
No legend lore has marked the tale,
But all men weep to drown their fears,
Far back as newborn infants' wail;
'Tis tears that cleanse the hearts of men
From stains, to make them whole again.

THE OUTCAST

His was a soul that had gone adrift,
Recklessly striding the Primrose Way,
His was the sin of a squandered gift
Offered, and spurned in an evil day;
His the awful, uncounted cost—
Homeless, hopeless, friendless, lost.

Cursed be the lure of the wicked trade
That ruins the soul in its bitter brew,
Cursed be the gold its toll has made
In shipwrecked lives and vicious crew;
While priests their mumbled creeds recite,
Its victims perish in the night.

O Christ, how long this dreadful thing
Has chained its slaves in grievous pain,
O Church of God man's freedom bring,
In Pentecostal power and truth again;
By Sacred Script, and Holy Rood,
Destroy this trade in human blood.

THE PENSIONER

Weary veteran of the war of life,
Unsung hero of a well-fought day,
One time captain in the strife,
Now, just common, human clay.
Tell me not the old, old story,
A hoary head is a crown of glory.

Neglected heir of public treasure,
Time-worn victim of the demagogue;
Raise his rent, curtail his leisure,
Increase his trouble catalogue.
Social justice! 'Tis a dream,
All things are not what they seem.

CLOUDS

When autumn skies are dull and grey
 Above the fields of ripened grain,
When Mare's Tails cross the Milky Way,
 Clouds are pregnant with the rain;
When sunshine follows harvest showers,
 To paint the hills with golden glow,
The mists display their magic powers
 In God's high multi-colored bow.

God dwells amid the swinging stars,
 Behind the curtains of the night,
Empanoplied with lightning bars
 To pierce the dark with levin light;
He rules the towering nimbus heights
 That cast their shadow on the land,
He holds the mystic Northern Lights,
 Within the hollow of His hand.

God rules the heavens' ethereal space,
 But, lest earth's children should forget
The loving-kindness of His face,
 He stooped to make the violet.

WHEN STORM CLOUDS RACE

When angry storm clouds race on high,
 To cast in gloom the virgin land,
And blot the gold from evening's sky
 With ruthless, unrelenting hand,
When woodland trees are broken down
 By crystal loads of peerless white,
And all the paths are overblown
 With debris from the wind-swept night.

Then, rooftrees ring with carefree song,
And hearths are warm with tender love,
Then, home means shelter from the wrong
And centre of life's treasure trove;
The tawdry show, the crowded street,
Are empty cups to quench our fears;
The things that count to make life sweet,
Are those that stand the test of years.

So, when the storm king leaves his lair
To range the shadowed, wintry fields,
A pipe, a book, and a drowsy old armchair
Beside the home hearth, comfort yields.



AUTUMN

The golden days of summer joys
Will have sped their passing soon,
And the fields and woods be sleeping
'Neath the silver, harvest moon;
When nature's hymn for eventide
Is worship in the countryside.

E'er long, in paler rays of light,
Autumn suns will paint the scene
In sombre hues of brown and mauve,
The trees in scarlet, gold and green,
And everywhere, on roads and town,
The faded leaves be falling down.

For autumn is but the vestibule
To cold winter's wind-blown days,
And spreads rich robes to beautify
The shadowed parting of the ways,
And when the harvest time is near,
To gild the crowning of the year.

GREEN AND GOLD

Autumn glory on the North Saskatchewan River

When autumn's artistry, with lavish hand,
 Paints the wooded vale in gold and green,
The jade-grey river, on auriferous sand,
 Adds its beauty to the Pactolian scene,
And loveliness and yellow glory blend
 In fields of splendor at the summer's end.

Where once the feathered Indians fought
 The tribal battles of his ancient race,
And the adventurous traders gladly bought
 The pelted traffic of the forest chase;
The blaze of gold and of primal green,
 Flooding the peaceful land is seen.

The jewelled summer months have fled,
 And ripened wheatfields grace the soil,
To give the world its daily bread,
 And to reward the farmers' heavy toil,
Beneath the flames of green and gold
 Dame nature's tales of truth are told.

THE LAST SWEET MELODY

I would not live the kind of life
 Some men call respectable,
I'd rather share the toil and strife,
 And taste the joys delectable.

I want to serve eternal truth,
 Drink deep from wisdom's well,
Keep my heart in tune with youth,
 And ride the surging swell.

When in the storm the thunders roll,
 Like Gabriel's call to duty,
I want a clean and fearless soul,
 To see the lightning's beauty.

And, if through forest paths I swing,
In search of woodland flowers,
I want to hear the birds that sing
Their canticles for hours.

When sunset paints a crimson sky,
And the ships put out to sea,
When evening breezes softly sigh
Their last sweet melody:
Then, tho' I live beside the bay
Where ebbing tide waves tumble,
I'll gaily sail my craft away,
And keep my spirit humble.

SPRING COMETH

Spring cometh like the morning,
Aglow with sunny hours,
Gay in festal garments,
Decked with fragrant flowers;
The roads are running rivulets,
Awash with melting snow,
And all the world is jubilant
To see the winter go.

Spring cometh like the morning,
With music in the fields,
And every budding garden
Its promised fruitage yields;
The birds returning northward
Seek out their summer nest,
And all God's good creation
Lies perfected and blest.

Spring cometh like the morning,
With God upon His throne,
And o'er the earth's sad turmoil
A gleam of hope is thrown
Across the clouds of hatred,
To calm the troubled din,
Through threat of storm and sacrifice,
The spring of peace will win.

MISTLETOE AND HOLLY

The pagan Druids, enrobed in white,
 Beneath the moonbeams' silver glow,
To grace their solemn, heathen rite,
 Plucked the pale green mistletoe
With golden sacrificial blade,
 To make a parasitic accolade.

Today fair maidens trim the lay
 With fragrant, perfumed evergreen,
And hang the pearly-berried spray
 To win the kisses of their swain,
While Yuletide merrymen in glee
 Dance around the Christmas tree.

Bedeck the hall with holly boughs,
 And spread the board refulgently,
O pledge the happy, red-lipped vows
 In innocence and with chivalry!
And may the celebrations bless
 The day with lasting happiness.

The pagan garlands fade and fall,
 Their vanities forever past,
But joyous Yuletide carols call
 To blessings that forever last—
Glad tidings of a Saviour's birth,
 The greatest gift of God to earth.

A SAGA OF THE SEA

The race of heroes of the sea
 Has not from earth departed,
Sacred and unsullied the decree
 That stirs the true, stout-hearted
Seaman on the wind-lashed main,
 To death defying deeds again.

Sons of the ancient Goth and Viking
Brave the tempest's angry blast,
And in peril stand unflinching,
Fly their colors from the mast;
Theirs the ever fadeless story,
Theirs the bright, undying glory.

Bitter gales by day and night,
Drove the clouds across the skies,
Towering billows spent their might
To crush the "Flying Enterprise";
On her bridge the captain kept
Anxious watch while others slept.

Strength of sturdy hull for hours,
Firmly built of tempered steel,
Pitted 'gainst the ocean's powers,
Strained from deck to plunging keel,
Till at last a gaping rent
Left her leaking, drifting, spent.

What matters if the fight is won
Or lost where honest effort calls,
The struggle counts when duty's done,
Whatever else of fate befalls;
Man's great fight against the sea
Has purchased greater victory.

Tall ships that perish in the sea,
Go plunging to their final doom,
No hope of immortality
Illumes the darkness of their tomb;
They pass, like shadows dimly seen,
Of stately things that might have been.

Hail to the man who bravely stood
Where danger threatened on the sea,
Son of the ancient seadog brood
Who storm the gates of destiny;
His name emblazon in the skies,
Master of the Flying Enterprise.

CAPE BONAVISTA

Historic warder of the western shore,
Audacious in thy rocky pomp and pride,
Upthrust from the ocean's fretted floor
To breast the force of storm and tide,
Cape Bonavista, thine the ancient right,
The seaman's tribute of O Happy Sight.

Most famous height of sea-washed land
To stem the Atlantic's westward flow,
How firm thy guardian ramparts stand,
To guide the sailors westward ho;
Thy far-flung beams of warning light
Illuminate the purple clouded night.

When first, at crimson break of day,
John Cabot saw thy welcome dome,
And steered his bold, adventurous way
Across the pathless waste of foam,
He named thee peerless in thy might,
Glad landfall of his soul's delight.

At thy strong feet the breakers surge
And toss in vain their salty spray;
The storm fiends chant their solemn dirge,
And futile, waste their strength away;
Unmoved, secure thy pillars stand,
Deep rooted in the New Found Land.

IN JOSEPH'S GARDEN

To Joseph's garden 'neath the hill,
They bore His body, stark and still,
Bore it from His cross of doom,
Into Joseph's rock-hewn tomb,
Where the fronded date palms spread
Mournfully above the dead,
And narcissi, 'neath the leafy shade,
Blossomed where the Lord was laid.

By Salem city's wall a garden lay—
 A sombre, shadowed grove by day,
Whispering in the failing light,
 When ugly treason stalked by night;
'Twas there the Man of Sorrows met
 Betrayal on Mount Olivet.
O sorrowful the hours, and bitterly
 He suffered at Gethsemane.

To Joseph's garden sunrise came,
 In golden light and crimson flame,
As to a waiting world was born
 The joy of Resurrection morn;
Bonds of Hell and Death were riven,
 Christ the Son of God was risen,
A living Saviour held the key
 To life, and to life's victory.

THE CROWDED INN

Hold the gate and let them in,
 Levite, Scribe and Pharisee,
Claims of Roman tax must win
 Place in crowded hostelry.

Golden coins and widow's mite,
 Tribute to an Emperor bring:
Close the door against the light,
 Bar the travellers entering.

Jesus in the manger laid,
 Lowly shepherds worshipping,
Wisemen kneel in homage paid.
 Ring the bells of Heaven, ring!

O the blindness of the choice
 Made that holy Chirstmas Eve;
Angel choirs in Heaven rejoice,
 Sinful men the truth believe.

JEHOVAH, LIVING GOD

The sun scorched land was brown and bare,
From Dan to Carmel's wind-swept crest,
Jehovah's anger in the sky's hot glare,
O'er nature's sullen, fruitless breast,
Had dried the vineyards everywhere.

In Tyre's dark streets, pagan altar rites
Were offered by the priests of Baal,
And infant sacrifices stained the nights
In Hinnom's stark, blood-guilty vale,
Where pity paled at the cruel sights.

In Ashtaroth, the groves of her idolatry
Where luminous with sacrificial flame,
And Rephaim's angry warriors bent the knee
To honor Ishtar's failing idol fame—
The tribes of Israel murmured bitterly.

Most faithless of all faithless kings,
Who tried to compromise Jehovah, God,
With Melkart's rule, Ahab in his wanderings
Met Elijah and heard the fatal Ichabod,
Most dreadful of all dreadful things.

"Come thou to Carmel, with pagan Jezebel,
O royal troubler of a troubled land,
And bring thy guilty priests of Hell,
Thy false, self-tortured temple band,
To test the virtue of thy heathen spell."

"Call on your gods," the prophet said,
"And I, O King, will call on mine,
Jehovah slumbereth not, nor is He dead;
Prove ye this day His Power sublime,
Before thy day of grace is sped."

The priests of Baal their altar built,
And put a sacrifice upon the wood,
They worshipped in their heathen guilt,
With frenzied cries and sprinkled blood,
The foolish, false Phoenician god.

But, Baal was silent, Baal was dead!
No flickering flame his altars warm;
The sky was splashed with sullen red,
Like fitful fires before a storm,
The pagan priests implored and bled.

Elijah laid the ancient tribal stone,
And built again Jehovah's shrine,
He called on Israel's god alone
To seal the sacrifice by fire divine,
And on that rock its flame confine.

Dark the heavy storm clouds lowered
O'er Carmen's parched, devoted breast,
From heaven the livid lightning poured;
Jehovah's altar to enflame and bless;
The priests of Baal in terror fled,
Convinced at last that Baal was dead.

Jehovah, in Thy boundless grace,
Cleanse Thou the stream of our desire,
From lust and greed and pride of place,
And the false altars' baleful fire;
Grant to our weak, bewildered race
The power to serve Thee faithfully,
And stand absolved before Thy face,
From the black sin of our idolatry.

O BABE OF BETHLEHEM

O Blessed Babe of Bethlehem,
Sweet gift of Love Divine,
Priceless pledge of life to them
Who kneel before Thy shrine.

Thy baby hands and tender feet,
That moved Thy mother's pride,
Bring messages of joy to greet,
Who worships at Thy side.

O sorrowful the wicked deed
That stained the holy place,
And sad the price that freed,
From chains, the human race.

For many men, in many lands,
To save them from great loss,
Thy pierced side, Thy gentle hands
Outspread upon the Cross.

O Blessed Babe of Bethlehem,
Thou Christ, the Crucified,
No gift of gold or costly gem,
We bring this Christmastide,
But hearts of love, faith to see
The truth in Thy Nativity.

FEAR NOT

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring good tidings
of great joy, which shall be to all people."
Luke 2: 10.

Fear not! The bells of Christmas ring
The chimes of hope and peace for men;
Ring out glad bells, your anthems ring,
O'er city street and snow-clad glen,
Let not the angels' message be forgot,
O breath of hope! Fear not, fear not.

Fear not! To you, this day, is born
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
This is the world's new natal dawn,
Fulfillment of God's sacred word.
Let not the glory of it be forgot,
Lift up your hearts, fear not, fear not.

Fear not! Let sadness change to mirth,
The clouds of doubt, to faith and love;
This is the celebration of His birth,
All other festal days above.
Be all your anxious fears forgot,
Rejoice, rejoice! Fear not, fear not.

CHRIST IS RISEN

The stone was sealed, the watch was set,
Rome planned to keep Him dead, and yet
He arose in triumph from His prison,
To all mankind the Lord is risen.

The sting is gone, the grave's sad gloom,
Light shines radiant from His Tomb;
Man's unbelief, his sin, is all forgiven,
Adore, the Lord of Life is risen.

The arrogance of death, its pomp and pride,
Shrink before the Saviour deified;
Morning breaks, new life is given—
Rejoice! the Lord himself is risen.

CONSIDER THE LILIES

Dear Lord, who made the lilies grow
In beauty, where the Master trod,
On us, Thy Children, now bestow
The blessing of our Father God.

Our youthful footsteps gently guide,
Along the straight and narrow way,
And in Thy care the grace provide
To meet our needs from day to day.

The blossoms of Thy truth we find,
With love revealed in every task,
We know the hope of faith enshrined
In every prayer our spirits ask.

Dear Lord, who made the lilies grow
And shed their fragrance on the air,
Teach us the calm of peace to know,
The triumph of Thy love to share.

THE ALABASTER BOX

Mark 14: 3.

An alabaster box of love's design,
Full of the perfume of love's grace,
A chalice filled with life's rich wine
Of sacrifice, a sacrament embrace;
Pour love's sweet essence out complete,
In holy worship at the Master's feet.

Let not the offended brow of Simon
Stay thy beauteous adoration,
Nor treacherous Judas prey upon
The impulse of thy deep devotion;
Empty the chalice—be it a paradox—
He'll fill for thee the alabaster box.

THE ETERNAL CHRIST

Before the bells of Christmas rang,
Their first sweet, seraphic chord,
The myriad stars in chorus sang
The praises of creation's Lord;
And, e'er the taint of human sin
Had laid its curse upon the land,
The Eternal God designed to win
The homage of the race He planned.

The Righteous Ruler, King of Heaven,
In mercy, from His awful throne,
As birthright to His Son had given
Man's salvation, His sacrificial Son,
That through faith in Him alone,
Who bore the burden of the cross,
The rebel race might be at one
With God, and freed from loss.

Thus the fearful price was paid,
The sinless Son of God was slain,
The Cross an altar was, its Victim laid,
To bear the shame, endure the pain.
As Moses in the ancient desert raised
The healing symbol, sanctified
To whosoever on that emblem gazed,
So was man's Saviour crucified.

Mankind on that sacramental scene
Has looked in mingled hope and fears,
And ageless still, the Cross has been
A sovereign balm for contrite tears;
Earth's rebellious sons of unbelief
Have raised their sad, futile pride,
Against its love, despite its grief,
To spurn the Tree where Jesus died.

But still, amid the toil and strife
Of little, foolish, faithless men,
To solve the problems of their life,
The Cross confronts the world again
In boundless, rich, unfathomed love,
God's great altar, and the Sacrificed,
The Eternal Gift from heaven above,
Lord of Life, the Eternal living Christ.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Snowflakes and sunshine,
Melodious the air—
Joy bells of Christmas
Sound everywhere—
Ring through the morning,
Ring through the night—
Soft falls the snowdrift,
Feathery and white.

Nature resplendent
In winter's gay mood,
Honors the Christ Child,
Glorifies God.
Wise men from Herod
Search for the King,
Shepherds while watching,
Rise worshipping.

Give to the poor man,
Cheer up the sad,
Feed, feed the hungry,
Pardon the bad;
Christ came to cherish
Poor on the earth,
Follow His footsteps,
Honor His birth.

THE CHARTER OF SONSHIP

"God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11: 18.

In Joppa, by the sapphire Syrian sea,
Where Jonah fled from duty's call,
And Peter slept in Simon's tannery,
And dreamed of mercy for us all;
The tribes of men, in busy enterprise,
Saw not the vision in the skies.

The sacred sign of man's equality
Before the holy altars of the Lord,
The Kingdom's guerdon of the reality
Of common sonship through His Word;
Nor colour, tongue, nor race nor creed,
Can shackle those Jehovah freed.

Beneath God's wise and kindly rule,
All men stand equals in His grace,
Nor can the errant knave or blinded fool
Becloud the glory in His face;
No mitred, sacerdotal priest can ban
His richest gifts from any man.

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THE AUTHOR of these poems has been writing poetry many years. His first juvenile effort was published when he was 15. He is 86 now and a retired newspaperman with twenty years' experience in the Press Gallery at Edmonton, Alberta, and was for a time in the Press Gallery at Ottawa. He is a Canadian who came to Canada from England as a youth.

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